

## PRESS RELEASE

# Former Bostonian of the Year Sentenced for Fraud

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### For Immediate Release

U.S. Attorney's Office, District of Massachusetts

### **Monica Cannon-Grant used thousands donated to nonprofit to pay for personal expenses; lied about her income to secure subsidized housing benefits; defrauded COVID-19 relief fund, among others**

BOSTON – The founder and former Chief Executive Officer of a Boston-based nonprofit was sentenced today in federal court in Boston for using thousands of dollars in donations to Violence in Boston (VIB) to pay for personal expenses; defrauding the City of Boston out of COVID-19 relief funds and rental assistance money; defrauding the Suffolk County District Attorney's Office out of Community Reinvestment Grant funds; filing false tax returns; and failing to file tax returns for two years.

Monica Cannon-Grant, 44, of Taunton, was sentenced by U.S. District Court Judge Angel Kelley to four years' probation, with six months of home detention and 100 hours of community service. She was also ordered to pay restitution of \$106,003 as well as forfeiture in an amount to be decided at a later date. The government recommended a sentence of 18 months in prison.

[In September 2025](#), Cannon-Grant pleaded guilty to 18 counts: three counts of wire fraud conspiracy; 10 counts of wire fraud; one count of mail fraud; two counts of filing false tax returns; and two counts of failing to file tax returns. [In March 2023](#), Cannon-Grant was charged along with her co-conspirator and late husband Clark Grant in a 27-count superseding indictment. Clark Grant's charges were dismissed in May 2023 due to his death. Cannon-Grant and Clark Grant had previously been charged in an 18-count indictment [in March 2022](#).

In 2020, Cannon-Grant was lauded as a Bostonian of the Year and social justice advocate, recognized for being a "voice for the community" and social justice advocate.

*"Monica Cannon-Grant's crimes were not a momentary lapse in judgment — they were a calculated pattern of deception that spanned years. She repeatedly lied to donors, government agencies, and the public, even after being caught —*

*all while presenting herself as a champion for others. Fraud disguised as activism or charity is still fraud. You don't get partial credit for stealing," said United States Attorney Leah B. Foley. "This case makes clear that exploiting public trust for personal enrichment is a serious federal crime, no matter how it is packaged."*

"Ms. Cannon-Grant's actions were crimes of greed and opportunity but will not go unpunished thanks to the law enforcement community, who have dedicated their mission to uncovering and putting an end to such devious schemes. This case illustrates that anyone who defrauds state programs and exploits their position in the community, will be held accountable for their actions. Postal inspectors are ever vigilant in bringing to justice individuals who use the U.S. Mail to defraud and otherwise take advantage of the financial circumstances of innocent consumers," said Nicolas Bucciarelli, Acting Inspector in Charge, U.S. Postal Inspection Service, Boston Division.

"Monica Cannon-Grant illegally enriched herself through a scheme that fraudulently diverted critical taxpayer resources from individuals who depended on unemployment insurance benefits during the COVID-19 pandemic. This case reinforces our unwavering commitment to protecting the integrity of the unemployment insurance program," said Anthony P. D'Esposito, Inspector General, Department of Labor, Office of Inspector General. "We will continue to work closely with the U.S. Attorney's Office and our law enforcement partners to safeguard vital U.S. Department of Labor programs and to ensure accountability for those who seek to exploit them."

"This case against Monica Cannon-Grant demonstrates IRS-CI's commitment to protecting all American citizens, especially those who are in need of assistance, like those that Cannon-Grant claimed to care about," said Thomas Demeo, Special Agent in Charge of the Internal Revenue Service Criminal Investigation, Boston Field Office. "Cannon-Grant not only stole from her own non-profit organization but did so at the expense of multiple public financial programs designed to help those truly in need. While Cannon-Grant personally profited from her own scheme, those in the communities seeking a lifeline from her organization had to go without."

Cannon-Grant was the founder and CEO of VIB, an anti-violence nonprofit formally established in 2017, the stated purpose of which was to reduce violence, raise social awareness and aid community causes in Greater Boston, among other purposes.

From 2017 through at least 2020, Cannon-Grant represented herself as an uncompensated VIB director to donors and other charitable institutions when, in reality, she and her late husband agreed to utilize their control over VIB's accounts and funds to

pay for personal expenditures through cash withdrawals, cashed checks, wire transfers to personal bank accounts and debit purchases. Cannon-Grant also applied for, and certified the applications for, grants offered by public and private entities that included materially false representations. For example, Cannon-Grant conspired to use VIB to defraud the Boston Resiliency Fund (BRF), a charitable fund established by the City of Boston to provide aid to Boston residents during the COVID-19 pandemic. After receiving approximately \$53,977 in pandemic relief funds, Cannon-Grant withdrew approximately \$30,000 in cash from the VIB bank account, made deposits of \$5,200 and \$1,000 into her personal checking account, and made payments on her personal auto loan and car insurance policy. Cannon-Grant did not disclose any of these personal expenses to BRF and, instead, falsely reported to BRF that all of its grant funds had been appropriately expended.

Cannon-Grant also conspired to defraud Boston's Office of Housing Stability by concealing thousands of dollars of household income in order to obtain \$12,600 in rental assistance from the City of Boston. Instead of truthfully reporting accurate information about the family's earnings and benefits, Cannon-Grant and her late husband misrepresented their actual household income to obtain rent relief funds that were intended to aid Boston residents who were facing housing insecurity.

Cannon-Grant and her late husband also conspired to defraud the Massachusetts Department of Unemployment Assistance by submitting fraudulent applications for pandemic unemployment assistance and certifying on a weekly basis that they were not working and did not receive over \$89 in income during the prior week. In addition, Cannon-Grant filed false tax returns for 2017 and 2018 and failed to file tax returns for 2019 and 2020, omitting tens of thousands of dollars in income that Cannon-Grant received in salary from VIB and through work as a consultant.

U.S. Attorney Foley; USPIA Acting INC Bucciarelli; DOL Inspector General D'Esposito; IRS-CI SAC Demeo; Matthew M. Modafferi, Special Agent in Charge of the U.S. Postal Service Office of Inspector General; and Massachusetts Inspector General Jeffrey Shapiro made the announcement today. Assistant U.S. Attorney Dustin Chao, Chief of the Public Corruption Unit, prosecuted the case.

On May 17, 2021, the Attorney General established the COVID-19 Fraud Enforcement Task Force to marshal the resources of the Department of Justice in partnership with agencies across government to enhance efforts to combat and prevent pandemic-related fraud. The Task Force bolsters efforts to investigate and prosecute the most culpable domestic and international criminal actors and assists agencies tasked with administering relief programs to prevent fraud by, among other methods, augmenting and incorporating existing coordination mechanisms, identifying resources and

techniques to uncover fraudulent actors and their schemes, and sharing and harnessing information and insights gained from prior enforcement efforts. For more information on the Department's response to the pandemic, please visit <https://www.justice.gov/coronavirus>.

Anyone with information about allegations of attempted fraud involving COVID-19 can report it by calling the Department of Justice's National Center for Disaster Fraud (NCDF) Hotline at 866-720-5721 or via the NCDF Web Complaint Form at: <https://www.justice.gov/disaster-fraud/ncdf-disaster-complaint-form>.

*Updated January 29, 2026*